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No. 387

The Singing Soul

A CHINESE PLAY IN ONE ACT

BY

MRS. HENRY BACKUS

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The Singing Soul

A CHINESE PLAY IN ONE ACT

Backus, Emma Hewitt
By *(Schumann)*

MRS. HENRY BACKUS

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PREFACE

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The story of Ko Ngai is from a collection entitled "A Hundred Examples of Filial Piety," translated from the Chinese by P. Dabry de Thiersant in 1877, and appearing later in Lafcadio Hearn's beautiful short story, "The Soul of the Great Bell." Mrs. Archibald Little also tells it in her book of travel "Round My Peking Garden," quoting at length from the original legend. We find it again in "The Yellow Jacket" in the following lines spoken by the chorus:

"The great bell calls me. The bell-maker cast it of pure gold and silver but its notes proved brazen. The Son of Heaven was supremely annoyed. The bell-maker recast it. When the metal was molten, to save her father's life, for fear its notes would again carry base tones, Ko Ngai, his daughter, disposed of her body by springing into the mass of white heat; so her soul became of the bell wrought by her father. The metal welded with her spirit, and its tone was then one of harmony and love."

In "The Singing Soul" the author has chosen to elaborate on the theme without doing violence to historical facts. The reign of the Emperor, Yung Loh, was noted as an era of peace; therefore, the author feels permitted to attribute to him the qualities indicated in the play, also to introduce other fictitious characters for the sake of the plot. At the same time she wishes to acknowledge her indebtedness to the writers above-mentioned for the inspiration furnished in the writing of the play.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

KWAN YU, a mandarin of the Illustrious Ming
dynasty.

Tsi Moo

TING LING

KO NGAI

YEN, a servant.

YUNG LOH, Celestially August Emperor of Peking,
Son of Heaven.

PAO CHEN, a student of the stars.

(More characters may be introduced if performed
out of doors, to include a dance by the fire spirits
and the bellsmiths.)

TIME: Five hundred years ago in the flowery
Kingdom. A room in the mandarin's house.

THE SINGING SOUL

A CHINESE LEGEND

SCENE. *Interior of KWAN YU's house in Peking, showing an upper room leading out upon a terrace or balcony which overlooks the courtyard. Exits R. and L. On the walls are Chinese banners, and in the c. a low tea-table with cups and saucers, teapot, a sweetmeat jar, and a vase holding a spray of plum blossoms. On the R. up stage, a teakwood table, on which stand the ancestral tablets of KWAN YU's family, and beside them two lighted tapers, also a jar holding sticks of incense. On the L. a carved seat large enough for two. Further up stage a long mirror resting on the floor, and beside it a bowl of goldfish.*

SCENE I

KWAN YU, TING LING and TSI MOO DISCOVERED *when the curtain rises. KWAN YU, the father, is standing at L. before his ancestral tablets; TING LING is kneeling at the R. in front of a long mirror resting on the floor, and arranging flowers in her hair. TSI MOO is also at R. kneeling over a gold-fish bowl feeding the fish)*

KWAN YU. *(Taking three sticks of incense and lighting them on the tapers beside the ancestral tab-*

lets) Three times I bow to the tablets of my ancestors and pray the gods may attend me and prosper my work. (KWAN YU kneels)

TSI MOO. Our unhappy parent! Seven nights and days has he knelt before the tablets of his ancestors, preparing himself for this fatal hour.

TING LING. (*Turning away from the mirror*) Our honorable parent was a fool to undertake the contract. His ambition will destroy him. A gun-maker turned *bell-smith*! 'Tis unheard of. Let the shoe-maker stick to his last.

TSI MOO. But think of what he gains if he succeeds! The favor of the emperor, the ruby button and a peacock feather for his mandarin hat. The Son of Heaven has set his heart upon this bell which is to be most wonderful in tone, the sound of it to be heard through the length and breadth of Peking. . . . Our father was a maker of munitions; he won his way to court by moulding firearms that pleased the rulers on the dragon throne in earlier time. But our new emperor is of different mind; he has no taste for conquest, but would live in peace, contented with his books. Therefore, to hold his office and to please Yung Loh, our father rashly undertook the contract. Then to make sure of its success, he advertised for bellsmiths far and wide, skilled in their art; and in the courtyard at our very door, he set this melting pot, where daily he may watch the workers' progress. If luck attends him he has promised me a necklace of jade beads.

TING LING. A jeweled fan I'll choose for mine. Tsi Moo, let us drink our tea. (*They rise and go toward table, where they sit and pour the tea.* KWAN YU has risen and is standing at R., where a curtained entrance opens out upon a balcony overlooking the courtyard. He draws the curtain aside and looks out)

KWAN YU. The men have begun to arrive. At sundown the bell will be cast—for good or ill—as the gods decide. Twice was the metal poured into the waiting mould, but when the bell had cooled, its lips were cracked and fissured with a hundred seams. Silver and gold had gone into the mould, together with iron and brass, for so the Son of Heaven decreed; but, alas, the metals were too far removed, they spurned alliance and refused to mix. Yet the Emperor must be obeyed; for his will is final.

TSI MOO. 'Tis not sweet enough. (*Sipping her tea*) Another honeysuckle leaf for my tea.

TING LING. (*Looking into the jar*) Little pig! Thou hast emptied the sweetmeats jar!

KWAN YU. (*Approaching the table*) My cares lie lightly on their hearts. (*To them*) Where is my little one?

TSI MOO. Our sister, Ko Ngai, went abroad quite early to the house of her singing-master. He is teaching her a new song.

KWAN YU. A new song for my skylark! Let her sing while she may. To-morrow, if I fail, her lips will be mute. Let there be music while the bell is poured; her song shall keep the courage in my breast. (*Turning to the balcony*) I think I see her coming through the gate.

TSI MOO. (*Derisively*) Skylark indeed! A skylark soars up high in air and flings its notes against the blue, and still we hear its song below. But Ko Ngai's voice is small and weak, so tiny you must bend your ear to take it in.

TING LING. A chirping merely, not a singing,—a sparrow in the hedge—

Twittering, twittering, tra la la,
Twittering, twittering, tra la la!

(They both laugh heartily. KO NGAI appears in the doorway. Her hair hangs low over her shoulders, she carries a samosen and holds a parasol over her head)

TSI MOO. Ssh! Here comes our song-bird!
(KO NGAI goes at once to her father and touches him lightly on the shoulder)

KO NGAI. *(Bowing as she turns)* Most august lord and father, a good-day to you!

KWAN YU. *(Holding out his hands in welcome)*
My child, you have stayed too long. I missed your happy presence in the house. Come here to me.
(They sit on the bench at L.)

KO NGAI. The master kept me past the hour to teach me a new song. I told him you were troubled here of late; I wished to learn a tune—a gay and merry one—to drive your cares away. Listen while I sing it for you. *(Thrumming her samosen and singing)*

“In the land of the wild, white rose,
Where the swift Ho-ang-ho river flows,
I sing while I play
And the hours slip away
In the land of the wild, white rose.”

(During the song the sisters mimic her, beating time with their fans)

TING LING AND TSI MOO. *(At the tea-table)*
Tweedle-dee, tweedle-dee, tweedledum——

KO NGAI. *(To her father, who nods his head approvingly during the song)* Is it not a pretty tune? The master says my voice is growing stronger. He has promised that some day I shall go to the palace and sing for the Emperor. *(Rising and coming forward with hands clasped)* Oh, I want to be a Voice—a ringing Voice—a Voice that

shall sound through the ages! (The sisters burst into loud laughter. KO NGAI turns to look at them with a grieved expression, then she puts her hands to her eyes, and runs out)

KWAN YU. (*Approaching his daughters angrily*) Let her be! You plague your sister far too much. All day you two sit idly drinking tea, painting your cheeks and lips, while she embroiders storks and pelicans, and sings with every stitch. Out with you! (*TSI MOO and TING LING rise hastily, and exit with their fans to their faces. YEN enters. He bears a scroll of yellow silk, printed in red letters, and sealed with the Dragon Seal. Bows and hands it to the mandarin*)

YEN. (*Bowing*) The Celestially August Yung Loh, Son of Heaven, Emperor of Peking, sends this message. (*YEN hands KWAN YU a scroll on yellow silk printed in red letters*)

KWAN YU. (*Reads aloud*) "Twice thou hast betrayed the faith we placed in thee when entrusting to thy hands the making of the great bell. If thou fail a third time to complete the task, thy head shall smile from a bamboo pole. Tremble and obey."

KWAN YU. (*Despairingly*) The Son of Heaven is angry! If I fail to fill the contract, my life will be the price.

YEN. The bearer of the letter moreover informed me that the Emperor is now at the temple offering prayers to Shang-ti the God above, from whence he will come himself to see the deed accomplished.

KWAN YU. (*Agitated*) The Emperor will come here? (*Turning to the balcony*) Make haste that everything be ready. The fires must be lighted and the metals fused.

YEN. Even now the furnace roars. The men

work night and day and rest not, knowing how important is the task. Yet still I fear the outcome. . . . Master, is there nothing lacking in the alloy?

KWAN YU. All has been done exactly as the Emperor ordered.

YEN. But Yung Loh is not an alchemist; what knows he of making bells? There was a wise man at the gate this morning asking to speak with you, but I told him you were at prayers and must not be disturbed. He said the warring metals will not mix till a fifth substance be added.

KWAN YU. (*Impatiently*) These meddling graybeards all would give advice. The formula is thus and so, we cannot change it now. (*Pointing to the tea-table*) Take these away, and make room for the Emperor. (*YEN clears the table and goes out. KWAN YU stares gloomily at the edict in his hand. KO NGAI enters excitedly*)

KO NGAI. Father, a palanquin stops in the courtyard borne by men in the livery of the palace. Do you suppose the Emperor has come to hear me sing? (*KWAN YU silently hands her the message; she reads*) "*Your head shall smile from a bamboo pole.*" You cannot fail! This time the bell must sound!

KWAN YU. I pray it may. In an hour we shall know. I fear the temper of Yung Loh. He has been patient and long-suffering. . . . Oh, that I had not boasted of my skill! (*There is a crash of cymbals announcing that the Emperor is at the door*)

KO NGAI. (*With her arms around KWAN YU*) Father, I feel you trembling. The Emperor must not see you thus afraid, or he will think you have no confidence in your skill. Go upon the balcony while I speak to him.

KWAN YU. (*Hesitating*) But it is not seemly

THE SINGING SOUL

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that you, my daughter, should be left alone with a man, even though he be the Emperor.

KO NGAI. I shall assuage his wrath with my song. (*Leading him out through the door to balcony at L. KNO NGAI seats herself on the floor beside the bench at L., and takes up her samosen. When YUNG LOH enters, conducted by YEN, she bows her head to the ground three times without rising*)

YEN. The Illustrious Emperor Yung Loh would speak with Kwan Yu. (*Exit YEN*)

KO NGAI. Celestially August One, my father shall be notified. He is meditating alone, preparing himself for this hour.

YUNG LOH. (*Regarding her with interest*) You are Kwan Yu's daughter?

KO NGAI. (*Bowing*) Ko Ngai, the youngest of three.

YUNG LOH. Ah! The singing girl whose name is in the mouth of poets! (*Holding out his hand*) Luscious One, I greet you. Rise. (*He helps her to her feet and, seating himself on the bench L., endeavors to draw her down beside him*) Sit here, that I may see you on a level with my eyes.

KO NGAI. (*Holding her fan before her face*) One may not look unafraid into the eyes of the Son of Heaven.

YUNG LOH. Then I shall put a cloud between us. (*Draws a strand of her hair across his face*) How dark the cloud is, and how charged with perfume!

KO NGAI. Does the Son of Heaven look angry behind the cloud?

YUNG LOH. And if he were?

KO NGAI. The fire of his glance would scorch my locks and shrivel them to ashes; but if he smiles, 'twill make them grow like new grass under a spring sky.

THE SINGING SOUL

YUNG LOH. 'Tis hot behind this cloud. I smother in it. You wear it for a while.

KO NGAI. (*Obeys him*) Is that better?

YUNG LOH. No, I like it less, for now I cannot see your face, though I catch a glimpse of shining eyes, and teeth like rice-pearls gleaming through the lattice. . . . Are you smiling?

KO NGAI. No, no, alas! The cloud is dropping rain.

YUNG LOH. Why do you weep?

KO NGAI. Because the Son of Heaven is angry with my father and threatens his life. Would that I could sing his anger away!

YUNG LOH. You may try, little bird. (KO NGAI picks up her samosen, and begins to sing)

"In the land of the wild, white rose,
Where the swift Ho-ang-ho river flows,
I sing while I play
As the hours slip away
In the land of the wild, white rose."

KO NGAI. Does the song please you?

YUNG LOH. I was not listening.

KO NGAI. The Emperor was not listening!

YUNG LOH. (*Leaning toward her*) I was watching your lotus lips. . . . Your cheeks are like the almond blossoms—your breath is incense. . . . (YEN enters, bowing)

YEN. (*To KO NGAI*) I seek your honourable father. An old man waits at the gate, the same who came this morning, demanding to be heard. He has a secret formula he would impart to him concerning the casting of the bell, which he says will insure its success.

KO NGAI. Bring him in. (*To the EMPEROR*) A stranger begs an audience, and if he knew your

presence here, fear would tie his tongue. Will the Emperor condescend to absent himself a while?

YUNG LOH. If your visitor stay not too long,—for I have more to say to you. (*YUNG LOH goes out upon balcony. YEN brings in the wise man, PAO CHEN. YEN bows and retires*)

PAO CHEN. I would speak with Kwan Yu.

KO NGAI. He is troubled and must not be disturbed. Let me take the message.

PAO CHEN. You would not understand.

KO NGAI. Transcendingly Wise One, you are a student of the stars who has read my father's horoscope and know the doom that threatens him. But Kwan Yu has no faith in prophets; he relies alone in the cunning of his hands. He will not listen to you. Tell it to me.

PAO CHEN. (*Tracing with his finger on the chart in his hand*) I have consulted the Starry Oracles and the Five Principles of the Universe. I have marked the aspect of the Silver Stream, some call the Milky Way, and followed the Yellow Road marked by the Signs of the Zodiac. . . . And there I read that *the stars are angry with Kwan Yu*.

KO NGAI. The stars are angry with my father?

PAO CHEN. (*Nodding*) They are wroth that he, in his bold ambition, should propose to make a bell of such a mighty tone, that its sound shall reach the skies, and jar the constellations in their spheres.

KO NGAI. Alas! is there no offering we can make—no sacrifice that will appease? A bullock two years old or a ewe lamb my father will place on the altar.

PAO CHEN. The blood of sheep or bullock will not placate them. . . . Yet there is a way to conquer their displeasure.

KO NGAI. OH, tell me by what way?

PAO CHEN. This misboughten thing which so of-

fends their heavenly ears must be re-made into an instrument of perfect sound, its dissonance changed to heavenly harmonies. . . . *The bell must find a soul.*

KO NGAI. The bell must find a soul?

PAO CHEN. (*Nodding*) A white soul—a singing soul—a soul turned to the Infinite. Kwan Yu must propitiate the stars. (PAO CHEN bows and goes out at R.)

KO NGAI. (*Repeating to herself*) The stars are angry. . . . The Emperor was angry, and I sang to him. (*Seizing her samasen and starting toward the door*) I will sing to the stars! (*Shaking her head*) No, 'tis no use! In an hour the bell will be cast—before the sun is set—before the stars come out. And no one knows where they tarry by day. . . . I must go at once and tell my father what the Wise Man has said. (KO NGAI starts to leave the room at R, but the EMPEROR intercepts her)

YUNG LOH. Has your beggar gone?

KO NGAI. He was no beggar, but a soothsayer with a warning. The stars are offended with Kwan Yu, that he should dare to make this bell, whose voice will speak so loud that even they must listen.

YUNG LOH. The stars are offended? Then 'tis with me, for I conceived the plan. Your father is but the instrument.

KO NGAI. (*Eagerly*) Then if you willed it, you can still undo it. Give up this daring scheme which mocks the gods, and be content with lesser aims.

YUNG LOH. . . . The bell is my life dream. When I ascended the Dragon throne, young and full of hope, I had a vision of what the world might be if wars should cease. My predecessors all were warrior men who ruled by force of arms; but in my youth I had a teacher, a philosopher, who schooled me in the wisdom of the prophets, preaching gen-

tleness and love. . . . So I resolved ere yet my reign began, to put an end to all this useless strife and sow the seeds of peace throughout the land. I first commanded your father to throw his guns into the melting-pot, and then to make the deed remembered for all time, I ordered him to cast a bell that would resound afar and wide, calling the people together, welding their hearts into one. . . . And on the lips of the bell I would have engraved the sayings of Buddha and the wise ones of all times, extolling the glories of peace. . . . But lest the iron guns should give the bell too harsh a sound, I had it softened with finer metals, deepened with gold, sweetened with silver, strengthened with brass. Thus the bell would become a *mighty Voice*,—a *Voice ringing down through the ages*. . . .

KO NGAI. (*In an awed tone*) A Voice ringing down through the ages! . . . But why a bell? Why not a man of eloquent tongue to go throughout your kingdom telling of these things?

YUNG LOH. I put no trust in men. Their tongues may lie, but a bell will always ring true.

KO NGAI. Then the work *must* go on?

YUNG LOH. If peace is to come—if wars are to cease.

KO NGAI. And if it fails—my father dies?

YUNG LOH. What the Emperor has decreed cannot be changed. Yet I may delay the task. My reign is young—there are years ahead in which to do the deed.

KO NGAI. Then you *will* put it off?

YUNG LOH. (*After a pause*) On one condition. *That you give yourself as hostage.*

KO NGAI. (*Surprised*) I—a mandarin's daughter—to sit at your side on the Dragon throne? It would frighten the song in my throat.

YUNG LOH. Not on the throne where cares of state engross my mind, but in the palace garden when the day is done. There I would have you,—you and your song.

KO NGAI. (*Delighted*) My wish has come true! I shall go to the palace and sing before the Emperor! . . . Then my voice pleases you?

YUNG LOH. Your voice? Oh, your voice is sweet and delicate——

KO NGAI. (*Disappointed*) *Delicate!*

YUNG LOH. As a wind-bell tinkling in the breeze, but clear as a bird's note. Come to my garden of perpetual spring, and we shall sit together under the banyan tree, waiting for the moon. My garden now is beautiful but mute; it needs a nightingale. Your song will make me forget this dream of kings.

KO NGAI. (*Troubled*) Forget your dream?

YUNG LOH. Why not? Love is for life's morning; these sterner tasks for middle age. Fame shall wait on love.

KO NGAI. (*Hesitating*) But the *peace*—the *peace* that is to be!

YUNG LOH. I shall find it in your arms!

KO NGAI. And the sound of men fighting . . .

YUNG LOH. We shall not hear it—shut in by garden walls.

KO NGAI. (*Earnestly*) Oh, do not give up your dream!

YUNG LOH. (*Coming close to her*) I see a fairer dream before me. My mind is on this hour.

KO NGAI. (*Moving apart*) And mine is on eternities. (*Turning quickly toward the balcony*) But I have forgotten my father. (*Leans and looks down upon the courtyard—draws back*) Too late to warn him now. They make ready for the casting. (*Stands irresolute*)

YUNG LOH. (*Eagerly*) There is still time. I will watch the ceremony below in the courtyard. If you take my offer, cast your slipper from the balcony and I will stay your father's hand, ere yet he gives the signal. (*YUNG LOH leaves by the balcony. KO NGAI stands looking down upon the scene below, while the red light from the furnace fires illumines her face*)

KO NGAI. (*Drawing back—afraid*) How the metals hiss and bubble in the cauldron! The hot lava spurts upward as though to escape the flames which leap to embrace it. . . . How it lashes itself to a frenzy like a creature unsatisfied—seeking that which is lacking. . . . (*With a sudden impulse she removes the slipper from her foot and holds it out in an attitude of supplication*) Ye gods who deny us your sanction,—behold a sacrifice! This token which my heart would cast at the feet of the Emperor I give that the flames may consume it. His love will I forget if you will but bless the task and make his dream of peace a reality. (*Tosses the slipper from the balcony—waits. Resignedly*) 'Tis no use. The gods make no answer. The Wise Man has spoken. The bell must find a soul—a soul in tune with the Infinite. . . . Shall I be a wind-bell blown by every breeze in the Emperor's garden, or shall I be a Voice, a Voice ringing down through the ages? The stars shall be satisfied! (*KO NGAI turns quickly with arms upraised and leaps from the balcony. There is a hissing sound, followed by the wailing of the crowd as her white body enters the molten mass*)

(*YUNG LOH enters, overcome, with the slipper in his hand, accompanied by PAO CHEN*)

YUNG LOH. I sought to catch her as she leaped

and came away with this. . . . Was it for the dream's sake, or to save her father's head?

PAO CHEN. Her soul went singing to the end, and singing it shall live again in the toning bell.

YUNG LOH. (*With his eyes still on the slipper*)
The nightingale is no more! My garden shall remain forever mute.

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The Return of Hi Jinks

A comedy in four acts, by Marion Short, author of "The Varsity Coach," "The Touch-Down," etc. 6 males, 8 females. Costumes modern. One interior scene.

This comedy is founded upon and elaborated from a farce comedy in two acts written by J. H. Horta, and originally produced at Tufts College.

Hiram Poynter Jinks, a Junior in Hoosic College (Willie Collier type), and a young moving picture actress (Mary Pickford type), are the leading characters in this lively, modern farce.

Thomas Hodge, a Senior, envious of the popularity of Jinks, wishes to think up a scheme to throw ridicule upon him during a visit of the Hoosic Glee Club to Jinks's home town. Jinks has obligingly acted as a one-day substitute in a moving picture play, in which there is a fire scene, and this gives Hodge his cue. He sends what seems to be a bona fide account of Jink's heroism at a Hoosic fire to Jink's home paper. Instead of repudiating his laurels as expected, Jinks decides to take a flyer in fame, confirms the fake story, confesses to being a hero and is adored by all the girls, to the chagrin and discomfiture of Hodge. Of course, the truth comes out at last, but Jinks is not hurt thereby, and his romance with Mimi Maydower comes to a successful termination.

This is a great comedy for amateurs. It is full of funny situations and is sure to please. Price, 30 Cents.

June

A most successful comedy-drama in four acts, by Marie Doran, author of "The New Co-Ed," "Tempest and Sunshine," "Dorothy's Neighbors," etc. 4 males, 8 females. One interior scene. Costumes modern. Plays 2¼ hours.

This play has a very interesting group of young people. June is an appealing little figure, an orphan living with her aunt. There are a number of delightful, life-like characters: the sorely tried likeable Mrs. Hopkins, the amusing, haughty Miss Banks of the glove department, the lively Tilly and Milly, who work in the store, and ambitious Snoozer; Mrs. Hopkins's only son, who aspires to be President of the United States, but finds his real sphere is running the local trolley car. The play is simplicity itself in the telling of an every-day story, and the scenic requirements call for only one set, a room in the boarding house of Mrs. Hopkins, while an opportunity is afforded to introduce any number of extra characters. Musical numbers may be introduced, if desired. Price, 30 Cents.

Tempest and Sunshine

A comedy drama in four acts, by Marie Doran. 5 males and 3 females. One exterior and three interior scenes. Plays about 2 hours.

Every school girl has revelled in the sweet simplicity and gentleness of the characters interwoven in the charms that Mary J. Holmes commands in her story of "Tempest and Sunshine." We can strongly recommend this play as one of the best plays for high school production published in recent years. Price, 30 Cents.

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SAMUEL FRENCH, 28-30 West 38th Street, New York City
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DOROTHY'S NEIGHBORS.

A brand new comedy in four acts, by Marie Doran, author of "The New Co-Ed," "Tempest and Sunshine," and many other successful plays. 4 males, 7 females. The scenes are extremely easy to arrange; two plain interiors and one exterior, a garden, or, if necessary, the two interiors will answer. Costumes modern. Plays 2¼ hours.

The story is about vocational training, a subject now widely discussed; also, the distribution of large wealth.

Back of the comedy situation and snappy dialogue there is good logic and a sound moral in this pretty play, which is worthy the attention of the experienced amateur. It is a clean, wholesome play, particularly suited to high school production. Price, 30 Cents.

MISS SOMEBODY ELSE.

A modern play in four acts by Marion Short, author of "The Touchdown," etc. 6 males, 10 females. Two interior scenes. Costumes modern. Plays 2¼ hours.

This delightful comedy has gripping dramatic moments, unusual character types, a striking and original plot and is essentially modern in theme and treatment. The story concerns the adventures of Constance Darcy, a multi-millionaire's young daughter. Constance embarks on a trip to find a young man who had been in her father's employ and had stolen a large sum of money. She almost succeeds, when suddenly all traces of the young man are lost. At this point she meets some old friends who are living in almost want and, in order to assist them through motives benevolent, she determines to sink her own aristocratic personality in that of a refined but humble little Irish waitress with the family that are in want. She not only carries her scheme to success in assisting the family, but finds romance and much tense and lively adventure during the period of her incognito, aside from capturing the young man who had defrauded her father. The story is full of bright comedy lines and dramatic situations and is highly recommended for amateur production. This is one of the best comedies we have ever offered with a large number of female characters. The dialogue is bright and the play is full of action from start to finish; not a dull moment in it. This is a great comedy for high schools and colleges, and the wholesome story will please the parents and teachers. We strongly recommend it.

Price, 30 Cents.

PURPLE AND FINE LINEN.

An exceptionally pretty comedy of Puritan New England, in three acts, by Amita B. Fairgrieve and Helena Miller. 9 male, 5 female characters.

This is the Lend A Hand Smith College prize play. It is an admirable play for amateurs, is rich in character portrayal of varied types and is not too difficult while thoroughly pleasing.

Price, 30 Cents.

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The Touch-Down

A comedy in four acts, by Marion Short. 8 males, 6 females, but any number of characters can be introduced in the ensembles. Costumes modern. One interior scene throughout the play. Time, 2½ hours.

This play, written for the use of clever amateurs, is the story of life in Siddell, a Pennsylvania co-educational college. It deals with the vicissitudes and final triumph of the Siddell Football Eleven, and the humorous and dramatic incidents connected therewith.

"The Touch-Down" has the true varsity atmosphere, college songs are sung, and the piece is lively and entertaining throughout. High schools will make no mistake in producing this play. We strongly recommend it as a high-class and well-written comedy.

Price, 30 Cents.

Hurry, Hurry, Hurry

A comedy in three acts, by LeRoy Arnold. 5 males, 4 females. One interior scene. Costumes modern. Plays 2¼ hours.

The story is based on the will of an eccentric aunt. It stipulates that her pretty niece must be affianced before she is twenty-one, and married to her fiancé within a year, if she is to get her spinster relative's million. Father has nice notions of honor and fails to tell daughter about the will, so that she may make her choice untrammelled by any other consideration than that of true love. The action all takes place in the evening the midnight of which will see her reach twenty-one. Time is therefore short, and it is hurry, hurry, hurry, if she is to become engaged and thus save her father from impending bankruptcy.

The situations are intrinsically funny and the dialogue is sprightly. The characters are natural and unaffected and the action moves with a snap such as should be expected from its title. Price, 30 Cents.

The Varsity Coach

A three-act play of college life, by Marion Short, specially adapted to performance by amateurs or high school students. 5 males 6 females, but any number of boys and girls may be introduced in the action of the play. Two settings necessary, a college boy's room and the university campus. Time, about 2 hours.

Like many another college boy, "Bob" Selby, an all-round popular college man, becomes possessed of the idea that athletic prowess is more to be desired than scholarship. He is surprised in the midst of a "spread" in his room in Regatta week by a visit from his aunt who is putting him through college. Aunt Serena, "a lady of the old school and the dearest little woman in the whole world," has hastened to make this visit to her adored nephew under the mistaken impression that he is about to receive the Fellowes prize for scholarship. Her grief and chagrin when she learns that instead of the prize Robert has received "a pink card," which is equivalent to suspension for poor scholarship, gives a touch of pathos to an otherwise jolly comedy of college life. How the repentant Robert more than redeems himself, carries off honors at the last, and in the end wins Ruth, the faithful little sweetheart of the "Prom" and the classroom, makes a story of dramatic interest and brings out very clearly certain phases of modern college life. There are several opportunities for the introduction of college songs and "stunts."

Price, 30 Cents.

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SAMUEL FRENCH, 28-30 West 38th Street, New York City
Now and Explicit Descriptive Catalogue Mailed Free on Request

BILLETED.

A comedy in 3 acts, by F. Tennison Jesse and H. Harwood. 4 males, 5 females. One easy interior scene. A charming comedy, constructed with uncommon skill, and abounds with clever lines. Margaret Anglin's big success. Amateurs will find this comedy easy to produce and popular with all audiences. Price, 60 Cents.

NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH.

A comedy in 3 acts. By James Montgomery. 5 males, 6 females. Costumes, modern. Two interior scenes. Plays 2½ hours.

Is it possible to tell the absolute truth—even for twenty-four hours? It is—at least Bob Bennett, the hero of "Nothing But the Truth," accomplished the feat. The bet he made with his business partners, and the trouble he got into—with his partners, his friends, and his fiancée—this is the subject of William Collier's tremendous comedy hit. "Nothing But the Truth" can be whole-heartedly recommended as one of the most sprightly, amusing and popular comedies that this country can boast. Price, 60 Cents.

IN WALKED JIMMY.

A comedy in 4 acts, by Minnie Z. Jaffa. 10 males, 2 females (although any number of males and females may be used as clerks, etc.). Two interior scenes. Costumes, modern. Plays 2½ hours. The thing into which Jimmy walked was a broken-down shoe factory, when the clerks had all been fired, and when the proprietor was in serious contemplation of suicide.

Jimmy, nothing else but plain Jimmy, would have been a mysterious figure had it not been for his matter-of-fact manner, his smile and his everlasting humanness. He put the shoe business on its feet, won the heart of the girl clerk, saved her erring brother from jail, escaped that place as a permanent boarding house himself, and foiled the villain.

Clean, wholesome comedy with just a touch of human nature, just a dash of excitement and more than a little bit of true philosophy make "In Walked Jimmy" one of the most delightful of plays. Jimmy is full of the religion of life, the religion of happiness and the religion of helpfulness, and he so permeates the atmosphere with his "religion" that everyone is happy. The spirit of optimism, good cheer, and hearty laughter dominates the play. There is not a dull moment in any of the four acts. We strongly recommend it.

Price, 60 Cents

MARTHA BY-THE-DAY.

An optimistic comedy in three acts, by Julie M. Lippmann, author of the "Martha" stories. 5 males, 5 females. Three interior scenes. Costumes modern. Plays 2½ hours.

It is altogether a gentle thing, this play. It is full of quaint humor, old-fashioned, homely sentiment, the kind that people who see the play will recall and chuckle over to-morrow and the next day.

Miss Lippmann has herself adapted her very successful book for stage service, and in doing this has selected from her novel the most telling incidents, infectious comedy and homely sentiment for the play, and the result is thoroughly delightful. Price, 60 Cents.

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